

Facts About Down Syndrome

What is Down Syndrome?

- **Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial copy of the 21st chromosome.** Typically developing individuals have two copies of the 21st chromosome; individuals with Down syndrome have three copies.
 - The cause of the extra or partial chromosome is still unknown.
- There are **three types** of Down syndrome:
 - **Trisomy 21** (nondisjunction) accounts for 95% of cases
 - **Translocation** accounts for about 4% of cases
 - **Mosaicism** accounts for about 1% of cases
- **Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition.** Approximately 1 in 775 babies in the United States are born with Down syndrome. About 5,000 babies with Down syndrome are born in the United States each year.
- **Down syndrome occurs in people of all races and of all socio-economic levels.**
- The incidence of Down syndrome increases with the age of the mother. But due to higher fertility rates in younger women, **51% of children with Down syndrome are born to women under 35 years of age.**

Health & Down Syndrome

- **Life expectancy for people with Down syndrome has increased dramatically in recent decades** - from age 25 in 1983 to the 60s today.
- People with Down syndrome have an increased risk for certain medical conditions, such as **congenital heart defects, respiratory and hearing problems, Alzheimer's disease, childhood leukemia, and thyroid conditions.** Many of these conditions are now treatable, so most people with Down syndrome lead healthy lives.

For more information, visit www.ndss.org

Characteristics of Down Syndrome

- A few of the common physical traits of Down syndrome are:
 - low muscle tone
 - small stature
 - an upward slant to the eyes
 - a single deep crease across the center of the palm

Every person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees or not at all.

Other Information

- People with Down syndrome attend school, work, participate in decisions that affect them, have meaningful relationships, vote, and contribute to society in many wonderful ways.
- All individuals with Down syndrome experience cognitive delays, but the effect is usually mild to moderate and is not indicative of the many strengths and talents that each individual possesses.
- Quality educational programs, a stimulating home environment, good health care, and positive support from family, friends, and the community enable people with Down syndrome to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

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